

O'Leary Senior Center Awarded Third Prize of \$250

Blue Cross and Blue Shield along with the Massachusetts Council on Aging (MCOA) held a contest to challenge seniors to lace up their sneakers and walk in the annual "Walk Massachusetts Challenge". Walkers could enter the contest at no charge to take on their own personal challenge of walking steps, minutes or miles. Walkers could walk at the gym, in their home, outside or on a treadmill. Several North Reading Seniors signed up in April to start their walking from May 1st to September 30th. Those that signed up were entered to win individual awards. By completing the challenge they were entered to win a \$10 Dunkin gift card, a \$25 Amazon card or a \$50 Visa Card. Also for each walker the Senior Center had an entry to win up \$1000 toward fitness programming.

Several seniors and staff signed up to represent the O'Leary Senior Center. One individual said "I signed up to walk at least 15 minutes a day. I am a 2 time cancer survivor and I find walking everyday keeps me moving in the right direction toward good health." Another participant got a used treadmill and did her walking indoors due to various health issues. Susan Tilton, the Outreach Coordinator for the Senior Center, signed up and set the goal of doing the "Couch to 5k" training program. Susan said "I was inspired by our seniors that took on the challenge and I used it to help me reach my own personal goal to run a 5k in July."

With several individuals entered in the challenge, North Reading was awarded one of the 3rd place prizes of \$250. Blue Cross and Blue Shield provided the prize money which the Center will use for programing. The Senior Center offers the ever popular Strength Exercise Class on Mondays and Fridays with Certified Instructor Emma Palmer. Also a new fitness program was added on Wednesdays - a Chair Dancing and Drumming class with Jan Spillane. Jan is certified as a Music Therapist, and Yoga Instructor. She offers fun, multisensory classes for seniors including chair dancing and chair drumming. These programs are creative, fun and employ proven music therapy methods for generating lots of enthusiasm, movement, joyful emotions and cognitive processing. The classes will get your heart rate going and they are uplifting, as well inspiring.

Lynn Wolf, Communications Manager, for MCOA said "We are so happy you participated with us. Next year (2022) will be even bigger and better. Look for details coming soon." Susan Tilton would like to thank all the people that signed up to meet their own challenge and to help the Senior Center win the award. Please call the Center to sign up for one of our classes or get more information. 978-664-5600